

Buddy² Mission Statement

Buddy² develops and facilitates leading edge learning projects in K-12 school communities to increase student achievement using technology in anytime, anywhere settings. Buddy² initiatives aim to share best practices among educators, strengthen family involvement in education, and extend learning beyond the bounds of school time and place. Buddy² values and supports equal access to learning technologies regardless of socioeconomic realities.

The *Buddy System Project* began in 1988 by providing home technology to 250 families in five school communities through a partnership of public and private institutions. The traditional *Buddy* (computer-at-home) project has served over 30,000 Hoosier families since the project's inception.

Buddy has provided programming, special project facilitation and training services to more than 12,000 educators from all 92 Indiana counties through its grants, professional development center, outreach training programs and conferences.

In 2000, *Buddy* renewed its mission to focus on research & development programs that drive student academic achievement gains, renaming the project, "Buddy²: the Ne_xt Generation." *Buddy* still honors and recognizes schools and teachers who strive to implement teaching and learning programs that show visible evidence of our Buddy core values.

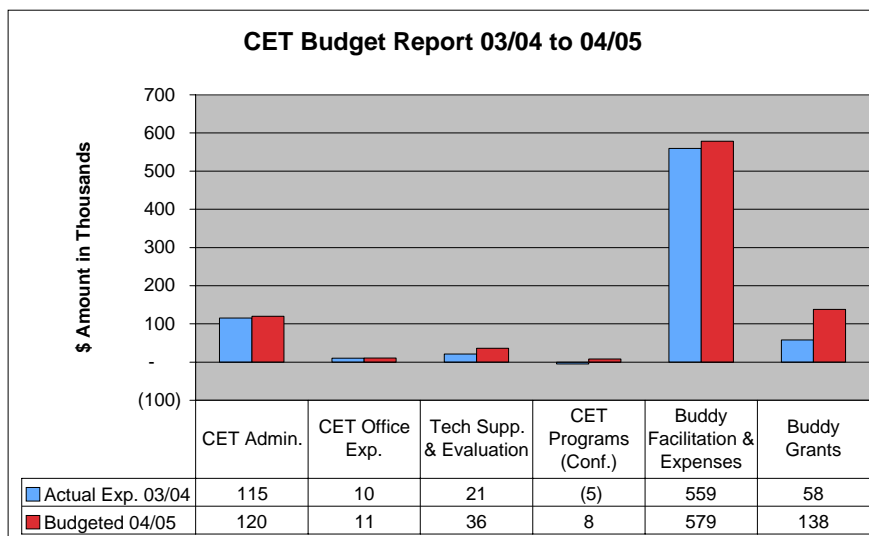
- Learning opportunities beyond classroom time and place;
- Technology as a tool to support learning goal achievement;
- Parent involvement in the education of their children;
- Equal access to technology resources for all students and teachers; and
- Reflective practice of teaching and learning for continuous improvement.

With a very lean budget over the past few years, we continue to strive for excellence in education, but have necessarily reduced services to our general membership in order to adequately support our ongoing *STAR* writing research and development program.

We still have many schools that value membership with Buddy and continue to seek and provide local support for their local *Buddy* initiatives: In 2003/2004, we had approximately 200 teacher members from 26 schools who were formally recognized as Buddy members. The rewards of membership include discounts on locally provided professional development, free family training facilitation, and regular publications of standards-based curriculum integration ideas. School and teacher members also receive certificates of recognition and are eligible to apply for mini-grants to support family involvement in their educational programs.

Buddy has maintained a training center since 1995. The current *Buddy Teaching and Learning Center* is co-located with Central Indiana Education Service Center at 6321 La Pas Trail in Indianapolis. We provide free and nearly free courses throughout the school year, to which any Indiana school may send representatives. We also provide onsite training at Indiana schools over many of the same topics for a modest fee. Over 1,000 Indiana teachers received training through the BTLC and BTLC Outreach program during the 2003-2004 school year.

Many teachers, families and organizations from Indiana and beyond visit our award-winning website on a regular basis. Visit it at <http://www.buddyproject.org> to see the myriad of resources to support standards-based education at home and at school.



The CET budget as approved by the Indiana General Assembly was 1.5 million for 2002-2003. Due to the current fiscal crisis in Indiana, our actual funding allocation was reduced to \$1,195,000 for 2002-2003 fiscal year. *Buddy* was again allocated funding in the 2003 General Assembly, but our budget was further slashed to a total of \$825,000 for operational expenses in 2003-2004 and again for 2004-2005. We are particularly disappointed in not having the funds necessary to offer member schools and future research and development partner schools grants to support

innovation in teaching and learning projects. Over the past three years and for the next two years, the bulk of our funding supports research, development and support of our STAR schools engaged in a project to dramatically increase student achievement in writing skills. (*See attached reports & charts*)

STAR Writers Project Results: Mastery of writing skill was determined by the *STAR* project to be a score of 4 or higher on the 6-point scale of the Writing Development ISTEP+ rubric and 3 or higher on the 4-point scale of the Language Conventions ISTEP+ rubric. In the first *STAR* project, implemented from Fall of 2001 through Spring of 2004, more than 1,100 students showed mastery gains in Writing Development that ranged from 7 percentage points (3rd graders participating for one year) to 39 percentage points (7th and 8th graders participating for 3 years). In Language Conventions, gains ranged from 20 percentage points (6th grade students participating 1 to 3 years) to 32 percentage points gained (7th grade students participating for 2 or 3 years). These significant gains shown in five schools during 2001-2004 prompted *Buddy* to engage in a 2-year follow-up project for 2004-2006 to study the impact of specific teacher training programs on student achievement in writing.

During 2004-2005 Buddy will:

- Publish the findings for the 2001-2004 *STAR* initiatives for the benefit of all Indiana schools. (Print and online)
- Engage in development and implementation of *STAR Writers 2* in five Indiana schools (2 sites from previous *STAR* group, 3 new locations) to drive student writing achievement via teacher training in instruction and assessment of writing using writing traits and ISTEP+ rubrics.
- Develop an online interactive writing assessment tutorial as well as provide training and access for Indiana teachers to practice writing assessment skills using the ISTEP+ rubrics.
- Promote a series of “easy” writing motivation activities for Indiana educators to use to encourage student writing across content areas. (*Kids Write!*)
- Provide quality teacher training to support standards-based, data-driven instructional environments through the *Buddy Teaching and Learning Center* and its *Outreach* training programs.
- Support all *Buddy* member school communities and educators through family involvement mini-grants, publications and facilitation support.

In addition, CET will administer continued development and implementation of *MyTARGET 2*, through remaining grant funds from the Lilly Endowment that supported this online tool for educators to gauge and support their training needs for using and integrating educational technologies.

As always, we very much appreciate the continued support and partnership of the Indiana General Assembly and the Indiana Department of Education that make our work feasible, productive, and cost-effective toward ultimate benefits for all students and citizenry of Indiana.